Intergovernmental and
Aboriginal Affairs

A FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

JANUARY, 1999

PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO ISSUES AFFECTING METIS AND OFF-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan leads the nation in productive partnerships with Metis and First Nations people. These partnerships contribute greatly to our social and economic well being as a province. As the next century approaches, our ability to work cooperatively toward our common goals will grow in importance.

It is important for all of us to participate in setting the stage in a positive way for the future, to avoid the experiences of the past. The people of Saskatchewan recognize the need to continue to expand and improve our partnerships with Metis and off-reserve First Nations people. Part of this requires that we all work together, with the federal government, to identify new and practical ways to address issues of concern to Aboriginal people in areas such as education, training, employment as well as individual and community well-being.

As a first step in this process, the government of Saskatchewan has developed a ***Framework for Cooperation.*** This document is intended to facilitate discussion on a common vision, as well as to help us to identify together our priorities for our future action.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Our Vision

All residents of Saskatchewan, including Metis and off-reserve First Nations people, will have the opportunities and resources to participate fully in our communities and our economies. Through education, training, employment, quality health care and other services, all people in Saskatchewan will contribute to, and benefit from the riches of our society. We will realize the potential of our shared future together.

Question: *Does the vision give the province a reasonable starting point from which to begin discussions?*

Principles to Guide Provincial Action

- Fairness and equity;
- Partnerships among the federal and provincial governments, local governments, existing and evolving Aboriginal organizations and institutions, Crown corporations, businesses, unions, other non-governmental sectors, communities and individuals;
- Practical, timely, meaningful and sustainable responses to needs, to foster self-reliance;
- Consistency with the provincial position that the federal government is responsible for services to Aboriginal peoples while acknowledging that the province is responsible for addressing the needs of Aboriginal peoples as citizens of Saskatchewan;
- Flexible administrative arrangements that retain accountability to the Province, Aboriginal people, and the public;
- Respect for Aboriginal peoples' cultures and rights, as recognized in the *Constitution Act, 1982*;
- Involvement of Aboriginal peoples in decision-making, and the design and delivery of services.

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Question: *Do the principles give the province a reasonable starting point from which to begin discussions?*

AREAS WHERE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER

Based on this vision and these principles, the Government of Saskatchewan is proposing four key goals to facilitate the discussion. For each goal, specific directions for action should evolve through our discussions. We propose that the Province, Aboriginal groups, provincial and local organizations work together to achieve these goals. Areas for working together are suggested for each goal. These areas are presented to begin the discussions. The list is not intended to be complete.

Goal One ***Enhance the successful entrance and completion of primary, secondary and post-secondary education for Metis and off-reserve First Nations people by:***

- Getting children ready for school
- Increasing school achievement
- Keeping children in school
- Increasing high school graduation
- Fostering literacy, upgrading and life skills
- Increasing enrollment in and completion of university, technical and skills training, and apprenticeship programs

Question: *Are these the key areas that can improve the chances for success in education among children, youth and adults and provide hope for a bright future?*

Goal Two ***Provide educational and training opportunities to Metis and off-reserve First Nations people that will encourage full participation in a representative provincial workforce through:***

- Increasing enrollment in and completion of programs to prepare for work including:
  - Apprenticeship programs
  - Technical and skills training programs, and
  - University programs
- Making successful transitions from school to training and work
- Increasing partnerships with business, industry, and unions
- Facilitating job readiness

Question: *Are these the most important steps that can be taken to prepare individuals for work?*

Goal Three ***Ensure representative workforce participation in the provincial economy among Metis and off-reserve First Nations people by:***

- Improving employment opportunities
- Improving Aboriginal peoples representation in the provincial government workforce
- Increasing Aboriginal economic development opportunities, business involvement, and participation as employers.

Question: *Are these the key areas that can increase Aboriginal participation in the provincial economy?*

Goal Four ***Improve individual and community well-being of Metis and off-reserve First Nations people by:***

- Identifying and addressing health needs
- Ensuring representation in health governance
- Promoting safe communities through community-based responses to crime
- Improving the safety of women, children and families
- Ensuring that social services are culturally appropriate
- Promoting sport, culture and recreation

Question: *Are these the key areas that can affect individual and community well-being?*

CONCLUSION - THE PROCESS BEGINS

We have a shared future. We will realize its potential together. Cooperation leads to partnership, partnership leads to innovation, and innovation leads to opportunities for all involved. It is important for Saskatchewan to participate in setting the stage in a positive way for the future.

Saskatchewan is committed to involving Aboriginal peoples in decision-making. The Province is asking for guidance from Aboriginal people and groups to build the framework for our ongoing work and for our future together. Your thoughts and ideas are essential to this process.

If You Have Any Additional Comments To Make . . .

We invite you to send any additional comments to:

Mary Tkach
Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
9th Floor
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina SK S4P 3V7
Fax (306) 787-5832